

THE LEISURE HOUR.

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"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



MR. SOPER THINKS HE HAS SOME CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

CHAMBERCOMBE.

A TALE OF NORTH DEVONSHIRE.

IV.

THE clock struck three as William entered the house by the yard door, which had been left open, and stole quietly to his room. Wearied with the labours of the night, and worn out from loss of sleep, he was soon oblivious both to bodily exhaustion and to mental concern; for it must not be concealed that a consciousness of culpability, arising partly from the doubtful character of the night's engagements, and partly from an irre-

pressible foreboding of evil consequences, had troubled him. He slept soundly on till the morning light streamed brightly into his bedroom window; and, on awakening, his first sensations were those of the dreamer whose slumbers have been disturbed by some strange fiction. But, as the many events which had been crowded into a few past hours came one by one before his mind, the reality of the whole became impressive, and the effect produced was a confirmation of the step he had taken—to be like his father and play the man—a state of feeling which fortified him when it became necessary to face Rebecca. It is impossible to

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

say what *might* have resulted from an interview with the housekeeper alone; but, just as he reached the hall, the entrance of two gentlemen, who intimated that they wished to see Mr. Oatway, prevented for the time being a private conference.

"He is from home," said Rebecca.

"When do you expect him?"

"I cannot say. He left home last evening, and has probably gone to a distance, as his horse is not in the stable."

"Do you know where he is gone?"

"I do not."

"I should like to know whether he is really out on horseback," said the younger of the two, impatiently.

"If you'll remain here until he returns, Mr. Soper, you can easily satisfy yourself on that point."

"Has he been away all night?"

"He has."

"And without informing you of his destination?"

"Yes."

"Is he in the habit of doing so?" inquired the other.

"That is a question, sir, which it scarcely befits you to ask, and which I do not feel called upon to answer."

"You may have to answer stranger questions than that," his companion remarked with a sneer, twirling his stick rapidly the while.

"Strange questions admit of strange replies, Mr. Soper; but, as I know you're no friend to Mr. Oatway, I suppose from the tone of your remarks that you're making a substitute of his housekeeper."

"Not at all, not at all; I've nothing against you whatever—quite the contrary; but I always disliked your master, who has contrived to get the advantage of me now and then, but with whom I shall be quits at last. Do you know whose this is?" he added, unrolling a leathern cape which he held in his hand.

"It looks like Mr. Oatway's," replied Rebecca.

"It *is* his. There's his mark on the inside, A. O."

It was a trying time for William, whose heart beat violently when the cape was thus unexpectedly produced, and the thought of a discovery flashed across his mind; but fear as well as prudence kept him silent, and Rebecca was silent also; for the mystery involved in Mr. Soper's possession of the article was as yet unexplained.

"I may as well say," remarked the elder gentleman, "that last night, as my servant was returning home late, he fell in with a girl who craved his compassion and help. She said that a vessel had been wrecked, and that she had been cut from a mast that had fallen overboard by the owner of this cape. It was with difficulty she could walk, on account of the bruises she had received; and how she escaped even with a broken arm, and found her way along the shore and up the vale, passes my comprehension. She says she is the daughter of the captain; and it's pretty clear from her story that the vessel was lured ashore by a party of wreckers, of whom, we suspect, Mr. Oatway was one. Suspicion has attached itself to him before to-day; and now, having very fair evidence, we'll bring him to book."

The housekeeper disguised her feelings as best she could, for she had too much reason to believe that Oatway and the Hele men were really concerned in the matter. But William, who had recovered himself, and was now as ready to speak as he had been to keep silence, interposed, and said, "That cape has not been worn by my father for more than a week."

"But it was worn last night," exclaimed Mr. Soper.

"Not by my father."

"By whom then?"

"By me."

"You?"

"Yes, me. Just as it was dark I saw a vessel which I thought would go ashore, and went down to the rocks with that cape on to watch her. It was I who cut the girl from the mast."

"A pretty story that," said Mr. Soper, with a laugh. "Your worthy father has drilled you well in your lesson; but it won't do."

"Then something else will do," replied William, the blood mantling his cheeks, "for father himself is just at hand;" and the rattle of a horse's hoofs confirmed his word. Riding up to the house at a rapid pace, Mr. Oatway alighted and walked in.

A sickly pallor spread over his countenance when he saw the two visitors, but the next moment a flush of anger succeeded, which bespoke the prevailing feelings of his mind, and, with a menacing tone, though with perfect self-possession, he said, "What brings you here, Soper?"

The gentleman appealed to quailed before the haughty and fierce spirit of Oatway; the more so as William's story had shaken his self-confidence, and made him feel less certain of the advantage he had alluded to, and he simply answered, "Is that your cape, Oatway?"

"Suppose it is, what then?"

"Why then there's circumstantial evidence to convict you of having something to do with the wreck of the 'Granada,' carrying Government stores and specie."

"Circumstantial evidence," said Oatway, contemptuously drawing the words: "you'll find it as hollow as yourself; and before you make that discovery, there's another nearer at hand which past experience may teach you to avoid. I know how to avenge an insult, Soper, and the way to escape it is to leave this house immediately."

"I'll take the cape with me," replied the gentleman addressed; "and you'll hear before long from a different quarter."

"Let me hear no more from you now at any rate," rejoined Oatway, his eye gleaming with passion; "and with regard to the cape, as it belongs to a *man*, you may put it about you and call yourself such for the first time in your life."

The visitors left the house, and noticed, as they passed the garden gate, that the horse which Oatway had left there was reeking with perspiration, and looked exceedingly jaded, as though he had accomplished a long journey.

"You see he *has* been out on horseback," remarked the elder gentleman; "and a hard ride he's had of it. Perhaps the lad's story is true after all."

"We'll leave others to settle that," his friend answered, in no pleasant mood; "but we shall catch him yet." And he commenced whistling a lively air as a relief to his disappointment.

There was a dead silence in the hall for several minutes after they had gone, until Oatway, who had watched their departure from the window, turned round, and said, in a tone remarkably bland for him, "How came that fellow with the cape, Rebecca?"

"Father," said William, "I threw it about me as I went out last night; and when the girl I cut from the mast caught hold of me, the hook gave way, and she carried it with her."

"Not so loud, William," replied his father, "for walls have ears; and, as Capern says, three may keep counsel if two be away."

Rebecca rose, and was leaving the room, when

Oatway interposed. "I did not mean you to apply the proverb so. It was your counsel last night in the hearing of the boy that led to this mischief, and now you must help to rectify it."

The housekeeper was too sensible of the error she had undesignedly committed to attempt a justification, and, anxious to remedy her fault as much as possible, she resumed her seat, and observed, "No harm can come of saving a fellow-creature's life, if that's all."

"But that isn't all, Rebecca. No one knows what that girl may have heard or seen. If you had only kept the boy in the chimney-corner all would have been right; for I can account for myself so as to banish the suspicion, and much more the charge, of having been on the beach at all last night."

"And would all be right in that case, Mr. Oatway?" asked the housekeeper, looking him in the face.

"Now don't be croaking, Rebecca," he answered; "you and I shall never see alike in some matters, and therefore have done with preaching, and give us the benefit of your good sense now that the case has assumed a different aspect from what I expected. Here comes Capern, I declare. We'll take him into our counsels; when a pinch comes, he's a useful fellow."

Accordingly the matter was explained to the sailor, who sat himself down on a low stool, and twirled his hat between his knees. It was some time, however, before he ventured on an opinion, but at length he said, "In a calm sea every man is pilot, Mr. Oatway; but who's to take the helm now? What does the housekeeper say?"

"I say this, Capern," she replied, "that William has staggered those gentlemen by speaking the truth; but it was not all the truth, I am sure. Should he be closely questioned and cross-questioned there would be a great deal more revealed. You say you can clear yourself, Mr. Oatway, and know best what that means; but, if you really had to do with the wreck, I see no way for it but that William should leave home at once. If he stays, he must, I fear, judging from all I have been induced to suspect, be either a false witness and perjure himself, or a faithful one and convict you."

"Ay, ay," said Capern, "there's sense in that; but he's no fox that hath but one hole. Let the youngster get out of the way, and we'll double on Mr. Soper and Co., depend on't."

"But how shall we account for William's absence?" suggested Rebecca, who began to see difficulties in the adoption of her own proposal, and to repent of her ready reckoning.

"So you're turning round on yourself, mistress," said Capern, looking up with an ironical smile on his face; "but there's no need. A fool may put something in a wise man's head, and, therefore, I should say, Mr. Oatway, that if you were to give the boy his dismissal for being out at night without leave, there would be as natural an explanation as can be thought of."

"Natural explanation," responded the governor, sternly, and with a sneer; "how so? Your judgment, Capern, must be looked into, if you think it would be natural for me to turn the boy out of doors for so small a misdemeanour."

"There's no occasion," replied Capern, turning his head on one side, whilst the expression of his face was indicative of pertness and independence, "either to look or speak in that way. Like the rest of us, you readily allow yourself in these things which you cannot bear to be charged with, nor even to be hinted at; for it's my opinion that if your temper were up, neither kith nor kin would be respected. And I do say, that, whether

natural to you or not, it would come natural to all the gossips about here to be told that you had sent the lad away for disobedience. They would believe it directly, and suspect nothing else, setting it down to your anger, and passing it off with, 'Well, it's like him.' Daylight peeps through a small hole, and if you don't see the matter as I do, it's no fault of mine."

The governor's resentment at the freedom of these remarks would have been immediately shown if his attention had not been diverted by a question earnestly put by the housekeeper, who said, "What *did* happen last night, Mr. Oatway. How can I be expected to advise for the best without knowing the facts of the case? Perhaps I have surmised too much, and been over-hasty in my proposition respecting William."

"You shall know all, Rebecca," he answered; "it is but right you should, after what has passed." And he proceeded to give her a detailed account of their doings.

"I know what you're thinking of, mistress," remarked Capern, winking both eyes and nodding his head, as the housekeeper sat silent with an anxious expression on her countenance; "but hanging goes by hap, and all is not at hand that helps. The boy is the only difficulty, Mrs. Stacey, depend on't."

"I'll not be a difficulty, Capern," exclaimed William, rising from his seat, and passing his fingers through his hair in a state of excitement. "I learnt last night that I can do something, and the spirit which carried me through is strong enough yet to make leaving home a trifle compared with father's safety, and your safety too. Many a one has had to turn out younger than I, and has been all the better for it."

As Capern had hinted, Mr. Oatway would have felt but little scruple, in one of his pets, in showing his son the door; but now, when his temper was unruffled, and he saw how ready the boy was to make any sacrifice for his sake, his hard, rough nature yielded to those soft emotions which, though habitually repressed, were by no means extinguished, and his lip quivered, and his voice faltered, as he said, "You're a good and brave boy, William; go and prosper. A visit to your mother's relations in the south will be a nice change for you, and this affair will soon blow over."

"The old un's like a singed cat," muttered Capern to himself, "better than likely." And then, speaking up, he said, "You must spoil before you can spin, Mr. Oatway. A year or two from home 'll do the lad good. It'll be the making of him."

"I'm not sure of that," remarked Rebecca, quickly. "Everything depends on the spirit he carries with him, and those with whom he associates. It would be a sorry making of him if he turned out like you."

"May be, mistress," replied Capern, in a displeased tone; "it's a sound head that hasn't a soft place in it, and on that ground I won't quarrel with you."

"Quarrel or not," answered the housekeeper, "I meant what I said; and I do hope that William will choose his companions wisely, and not allow himself in such ways as those which have brought us trouble now, and will bring more trouble sooner or later. You're sowing the wind, Capern, and you'll reap the whirlwind."

"A galled horse won't endure the comb, mistress," said the sailor, warmly. "Say no more on that score, or, in order to clear my character, I may have to call upon your master to defend himself. We row in one boat, I believe."

"If you have anything to say to the boy, Rebecca, I pray you say it," observed Mr. Oatway; "otherwise, be sparing of your words. The sooner he goes the better. And, Capern," he added, mastering his emotions, and

assuming, as best he could, his wonted air, "the cave must be stripped to-night, and another storehouse found for the spoil. Let Fosdick know; and, though it would take a keen searcher to spy out our locker, we'll clear all out before the small hours are over. There shall be neither sign nor token, track nor trail, to bear witness against a less defiant culprit than that ruthless robber the sea."

"Ay, ay," said Capern, "we'll make all right. When bale is highest boot is nighest. The worst has come, and the worst isn't so bad. But I'm interrupting you, Mrs. Stacey."

Rebecca was not disposed, however, to say anything to William just then; and, leaving the room, she began to make preparation for his journey, pursuing her task with a sorrowful heart and with tearful eyes; for the lad was to her as a son, and she thought and felt that her duties as a foster-mother were about perhaps to cease for ever.

v.

MR. SOPER and his friend Collins directed their steps from Oatway's house toward the shore, irritated beyond measure at the summary dismissal to which they had been subjected, and determined to leave no stone unturned that might help them to retaliate. They discussed on their way, in no honeyed phrases, the character of the man they had again encountered, and carefully examined the merits of the case as it then stood—a case which threatened, as they were compelled to admit, to baffle them completely. They had calculated on taking their enemy by surprise; on startling him into a guilty expression of countenance; on confounding him so thoroughly by the vision of the cape as to make his bewildered silence a conclusive witness. But they had failed; and should they fail altogether, the gulf which had separated them from a man whom they both hated and feared would be greatly widened, and they would be exposed to a foe more embittered than ever. This view of the case was somewhat serious in the estimation of Soper, who had a mortal dread of Oatway, and shrank from the prospect of dealing with an angered savage, as he called him, when he hoped to have triumphed over an entrapped victim.

Their discourse was earnestly sustained until they reached the shingled pathway near the beach, when they met three men coming up from the shore, conversing with as much warmth as themselves. In one of them, who was well dressed and wore the insignia of governmental service, a spare, sharp-featured personage, they recognised a naval officer who for the last month had taken up his quarters in Ilfracombe, and made daily trips up or down channel in a large and well-served lugger. His companions were representatives of two other grades of society. The one a constable, whose countenance betokened an undue quantum of self-satisfaction, unauthorized however by his mental status; the other, a sailor-dressed attendant, who might have been a pirate or a wrecker, or anything else that required the boldness and cunning which gleamed from his deep-set eyes.

"A sad business this wreck, gentlemen," said the officer, raising his hat; "and not a sign of the dollars we expected her to bring. All hands lost besides."

"A shameful business, you might have said," replied Soper, "for there's every reason to believe that a party of wreckers have had a hand in it, and no doubt the dollars are in safe custody by this time. The captain's daughter is saved, and reports that there were men about with lights when the vessel came ashore."

"That's just what I was saying," chimed in the constable: "isn't it, Perkins?"

"Just," answered Perkins, the man in sailor attire.

"And there's no getting hold of those fellows at all—is there, Perkins?"

"No, there ain't," he responded.

"They're as cautious as rooks, and stick to each other like bark to a tree. Don't they, Perkins?"

"Yes, they do," said the sailor.

"And yet," Mr. Collins observed, "we know pretty well who they are, and made sure this morning we should pin their leader. I'm afraid, however, he will give us the slip, unless we can make that son of his deliver himself differently."

"Do you mean to say," broke in the officer, "that there are men bold enough to beard the king and rob the Government? Then I'll ferret them out, the dregs of the commonwealth, and bring them to justice, every man of them. I'll do it, I will."

"I'm sure you will, sir," said the constable. "Won't he, Perkins?"

"I'll—" The officer was about to declare what more he would do, but Mr. Collins interrupted him by saying, "Will you accompany me to my house, sir? We can talk the matter over quietly after dinner, and you will have an opportunity of seeing the girl who was saved, and of judging from her story what course it will be best to pursue."

"I accept your invitation with pleasure," replied the officer. "But we can dispense with Perkins for the present. You can go, Perkins; and mind and keep your eyes and ears open."

"You'll do that, won't you, Perkins?" said the constable.

"Ye—s," answered Perkins; and he walked away towards the village; but neither the constable, nor the officer, nor the two country gentlemen could see the contemptuous expression of his face, nor hear the words he softly uttered for his own special benefit. "Fools grow without watering, as Capern says; I'll keep my eyes and ears open, Mr. Priggins, sure enough."

The gentlemen whom Collins had invited to his house did ample justice to the hospitality he had so much pleasure in showing them at his table. Both the officer and the sub became more and more loquacious as dinner proceeded; and especially when the cloth was withdrawn, as they had then an opportunity of proving that they were susceptible of an excitement which quickened their faculties amazingly. Mr. Soper related, whilst the meal went on, the story of the captain's daughter; and gave an exaggerated account of his interview with Oatway, working himself up by the recital into a state of wrath that fired the combustible quarter-deck man, who poured forth a volley of exclamations and threats that enhanced in no small degree the constable's estimate of his powers and capabilities.

"I see through him at a glance, Mr. Soper," he remarked. "He's a low, coarse, daring fellow, as scheming, and wily, and hard to catch as—"

"As Oliver Crom.," suggested the constable. "Just such another. Isn't he, Mr. Sharpin?"

The officer looked at him angrily, but proceeded: "as scheming, and wily, and hard to catch as—that fellow has spoilt my simile; and, I must confess it, by introducing a better; so I will only add that it appears to me extremely extraordinary that a man of his parentage and means should degrade himself so far as to associate with a set of villains who neither fear God nor honour the king."

"Who fear nothing and honour no one," rejoined

Mr. Collins; "the slaves of passions that are excited by that root of all evil, avarice. It is the love of money that explains Oatway's companionship and ways, even admitting a natural tendency to vulgar life."

"So I should think," put in the constable. "A man, as my father used to say, will do anything and risk anything for pelf; won't he, Mr. Sharpin?"

"Don't talk so much, Higgins," said the officer; "though your remark is somewhat to the point. When the demon of covetousness gets hold of a man it makes him blind, callous, and cruel; ready for any venture and for any vice."

"Well," said Mr. Collins, "it won't be long, in my opinion, before Oatway finds himself ruined. But, perhaps, it would be well to call in at once the young lady, who is the chief witness in the case."

"Certainly," replied the officer.

Their host disappeared, and speedily returned with a pleasant-looking girl, whose left arm was in a sling, and who was suffering from a severe contusion on the right temple. She changed colour on entering the room, but was set at ease by the kind and fatherly manner in which Mr. Collins requested her to give an account of all she had witnessed during the previous night.

She acceded at once, telling her tale simply and modestly, with an evident desire to give an unvarnished statement of facts; and, though it cost her something to repress her feelings and refrain from tears, she accomplished her task with calmness and self-possession. Instead of becoming impassioned with the recital, or uttering strong opinions, or drawing censorious inferences, she confined herself to what had really occurred; and if, as Mr. Soper afterwards said, there was a want of warmth in her manner and diction, which, considering the circumstances, was in his estimation both inexplicable and unjustifiable, there were traits of character revealed, nevertheless, which bespoke a generous, truthful nature, just to an iota, and full of the charity that thinketh no evil. And it is but right to say that, whilst Soper was annoyed at the sober, uncensuring style in which she spoke, he was struck, after all, with the amiability, kindness, and candour which beamed in her countenance and dictated her words; nor could he close his ears to a whispering voice which told him that, with all his boasted frankness, and the fierceness of his zeal for the right, he was sadly wanting in those tender, forbearing qualities which he now saw so distinctly portrayed.

She added but little to the knowledge of the listeners beyond what has already been related, save that the ship had become so leaky from the rough weather they had experienced as to require the incessant working of the pumps; that when the storm was getting to its height, and they found it impossible to beat off from the land, they were hailed by a party of fishermen in a large smack, who advised her father to cast anchor for the night, promising to keep a look-out, and to intimate by torches and lanterns the best place for landing in case it might be necessary to take to the boats; that when the cables parted, she was lashed by her father himself to the foretop mast, to be out of the sweep of the sea, if the ship took ground on a beach that shelved but slightly; and that when the mast went overboard, she almost lost her consciousness, but was roused to make an effort and to call for help when she found that the spar rested on the rocks.

"Every sea broke over me," she said; "and, as the mast was held on by ropes to the vessel, and the tide was rising, there appeared the certainty of a watery

grave, though some way I was impressed with the thought that I should be saved. And saved I was, through the exertions of a youth, who risked his own life for mine, and to whom I feel indebted more than I can tell. Quickly separating the cords with his knife, the sea breaking over us the while, and I clinging to him as firmly as I could, we were borne forward by a heavy billow, which sent us in different directions, separated by the loosening of the young man's cape, which I fortunately possess, as it may enable me to discover my deliverer. Happily, I was thrown on a bed of sand in one of the gullies, receiving no further injury than a few bruises and a wounded arm; and, having acquired the sailor faculty of seeing in the dark, I soon got beyond the breakers by clambering the crags. Turning to the right, I kept along the shore, having noticed whilst it was daylight some houses in that direction; and finding a pathway that took me to the high land, I fell in there with Mr. Collins's servant. He brought me here; and much, very much do I owe to the kindness of the friends I have met with in this house, whilst I entertain the hope that I may yet thank in person the disinterested and courageous young man who ventured so much on my account, when no other human help was at hand."

"There was plenty of help at hand, miss," said Soper, "if those fellows with the lights had been disposed to render it. But what they wanted was to make an end of all on board, that neither meddlers nor peachers might trouble them."

"And that seems to show," observed Mr. Collins, "that young Oatway was not one of the party. Even if disposed, he would never have dared to make the attempt he did if he belonged to them."

"I see that," responded Soper; "I see that. If old Oatway and his crew had an eye on the vessel, as it seems they had, he would as soon have thought of throwing himself into the sea as of cutting the young lady adrift with his own hand. We sha'n't catch him, Collins, this time."

"I don't think we shall," he replied; "but I pity the son, if Oatway were really with the wrecking party."

"I agree in that opinion," said the constable; "he'll take vengeance on him; won't he, Mr. Collins?"

"I'm sure," said the maiden, "that the youth who rescued me belonged to no wreckers. He spoke so kindly, and bade me keep up my courage all the while, and let me cling to him, though it increased his danger, that I'm confident he wasn't in company with bad men."

"Are you certain, miss," inquired the officer, "that it was a youth to whom you are indebted? How did you make out that, smothered as you were with waves?"

"I judge from his voice, sir, and from the dim view I had of his form. It must have been a youth. It was a youth, sir."

"Well, well," said the officer, laughing, "you prefer to make him a youth, I see, and are, as you should be, enthusiastic in his favour; and since he is not very far off, you can tell him all your heart before nightfall."

She coloured, but was prevented from replying by the ready tongue of the constable, who remarked: "I've heard my father say that gratitude and admiration in such cases are but other words for love. Young Oatway's a fine young fellow—I know him—and a pretty couple they'd make; wouldn't they, Mr. Sharpin?"

The young lady excused herself and retired, and the constable went on: "That's a good girl that. She's a right-hearted girl all out. She'd be as ready to risk her life in doing a kind action as the youngster was; wouldn't she, Mr. Collins?"

"I think she would," said the officer. "If I'm a judge, she has as much heart and nerve as the daughter of the hotel-keeper in Tavistock who frightened Cromwell's marauding dragoons, and saved her father's cellar from being plundered."

"That must be an interesting story I should think," observed his host.

"It is," said the constable. "Isn't it, Mr. Sharpin?"

"The gentlemen must judge for themselves, Higgins; but I shall be happy to relate it."

"The Parliamentarians, having made sad havoc with the property of all in the town who were known to be Royalists, and having spoiled and defaced the sacred edifices from which they could not keep their sacrilegious hands, proceeded to the 'King's Arms,' determined that not a drop of wine should remain in the vaults wherewith to pledge again the health of his majesty. The vintner's daughter, who was in a decline, pale and thin, but of a fine spirit, anticipated them in their movements, arraying herself in a white cloth, and taking her station at the far end of the cellar, directly facing the long dark passage by which it was approached. The soldiers at length descended, and were making their way along the passage, headed by the corporal, when the girl moaned, and, startled by the sound, they paused, the foremost catching sight at the same moment of the white figure in the distance, with its arm and forefinger raised as if to forbid intrusion.

"It's a spirit," said one of the troopers, 'but, spirit or no spirit, I'll send a bullet through it.' And he raised his carbine to his shoulder.

"She remained immovable whilst he steadied his aim, and, observing this, the corporal shouted, 'Stop! we've no commission to fight with ghosts! let's be gone.'

"That's no flesh and blood," said another of the party, trembling with fear; and he began to sing a bit of a hymn, whining it out after the fashion of those fellows. But ere he had finished a stave, the apparition began to advance; and helter-skelter they went along the passage, upsetting each other, and running as if for their lives; nor was a man of them to be seen in the town an hour after. The wine was preserved, and in their hurry they left behind them besides the most of the booty they had collected."

"Thank you," said Mr. Collins; "but it's time we should settle what plan it will be most politic to pursue."

"I was thinking," responded the officer, "before I began that story, how possible it is that the lad's kind-heartedness may have induced him to act as he did, even supposing that he *was* in company with the wreckers. We really must have him examined, and *cross-examined*. It's our duty to do so."

"I was just going to say the same thing," interposed the constable; "and duty is duty, isn't it, Mr. Sharpin?"

Mr. Sharpin looked annoyed at his sub's loquaciousness, and would have administered a rebuke if his attention had not been diverted by the entrance of a servant, who said, "There's a man called Perkins, sir, who wants to speak to the officer."

"Let him come in," said Mr. Collins; "perhaps he has made a discovery."

The sailor entered, and was invited to sit down.

"Well, Perkins," said the officer, "what's up?"

"I've kept my eyes and ears open, sir, but I can't make out anything in the village worth speaking of."

"Then what did you come here for?"

"Why, just, sir, to tell the two gentlemen here that Mr. Oatway has vowed vengeance against them; and he don't mind what he does in a passion. He's been abusing the housekeeper like a madman, and has turned his son

out of doors for not keeping to the house whilst he was from home last night on business, away somewhere beyond South Moulton."

"Is the lad gone, then?" inquired Mr. Sharpin, eagerly.

"Iss, sure, sir. He's a spirited lad, and went off nobody knows where."

"We must look after him, however," said the officer, rising. And the constable also rose, observing, "It won't do to make no job at all out of this here, will it, Perkins?"

LONDON FOGS.

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NOVEMBER is the month chiefly associated with that strange atmospheric phenomenon known as "a London fog." It is not confined, however, to that month. A country visitor, on entering London for the first time at any hour on Saturday, January 21, 1865, from one of our great metropolitan railway termini, must have obtained a severe practical illustration of the fact. If his arrival occurred in the early morning, he would have noticed the thick hoar-frost, composed of spiculae of all shapes and of marvellous beauty of structure, lying almost like a thin covering of snow on the roads, pavements, and on the prominent parts of the houses; while, in the suburbs, every branch or twig was covered to the thickness of half an inch with this beautiful snow-like rime. As the day advanced, he would have found that a dense fog had enveloped every portion of the metropolis except the northern, which was soon however included. The intensity of the gloom gradually increased, until carriage traffic became almost impossible. The first impressions of our country friend would probably tend to confirm in his mind that the old saying "a London fog can be cut with a knife" is not far short of a literal truth.

The origin of these dense local fogs, which occasionally occur in London, and which impede so much the heavy commercial traffic, particularly on the river and river-side, is owing principally to the proximity of the Thames. The temperature of the river in frosty weather is always considerably higher than that of the air immediately above it. Besides, the temperature of the air on the surface of the ground of London is higher than that of the atmosphere above. The cold, damp currents of the atmosphere, coming in contact with the warmer and lighter strata which cover the town, displace the latter, and cause that condensation of the vapour which produces the aqueous precipitation which we call fog. In the country districts these different atmospheric currents have not the same effect, on account of the equality of their specific gravity. For this reason, London may be enveloped in gloomy darkness while the surrounding country is clear and bright. But there is no doubt that much of the intensity of an opaque London yellow fog is produced by the immense amount of smoke which in winter is pouring forth from the hundreds of thousands of chimneys from early morning. In very calm weather this great accumulation of carbon in the atmosphere inevitably tends to give to a fog that peculiar dirty yellowish appearance which belongs to a truly genuine city specimen of this phenomenon. Under ordinary circumstances, when the air is in motion, the smoky impurity which is constantly emitted from the London houses has but a partial effect in producing gloom; for, when once escaped from a chimney, the particles of carbon absorb air, and consequently increase in weight; but the wind at the same time is sufficiently strong

to carry them some distance, separating the individual particles. But as, in the case of fogs, the air is perfectly tranquil, and also saturated with moisture, the specific weight of the accumulation of carbonic particles rapidly increases, causing them to be completely amalgamated with the aqueous deposition. The compound effect of this combination of aqueous and carbonic particles is shown in London fogs.

These fogs, which are nearly always accompanied with an intense gloom, have generally a peculiar odour attaching to them. This odour cannot be satisfactorily explained if we suppose that it arises solely from the intermixture of vapour and smoke. It may be produced, however, by the noxious effluvia, which so much affect the sanitary condition of various portions of the metropolis, being prevented by the density of the air from passing off into the higher regions of the atmosphere; or, it is possible that, to a certain extent, it may be attributed to the chemical nature of the strata upon which the city has been erected. In confirmation of this latter hypothesis, it has been discovered that many wells, the water of which percolates through the London clay, generate a considerable amount of sulphuretted hydrogen gas, which appears to be the characteristic odour of these dense fogs.

It has been ascertained, from some tolerably accurate observations, that the height to which most fogs ascend is limited to between two and three hundred feet. A spectator stationed at the top of St. Paul's on these occasions would, therefore, probably have a brilliantly clear sky above him, while below, on all sides, nothing would be visible except one continuous stratus cloud.

If we examine with a lens the aqueous particles of a dense London fog, we shall find that they are formed of small, apparently opaque bodies; and, on a closer examination, it will be perceived that these minute bodies are composed of water, analogous in form to small drops of quicksilver when poured into a porcelain saucer, or water at the bottom of a vessel smeared with grease. Meteorologists are divided in opinion as to whether these aqueous bodies are hollow or solid. That of Dr. Halley, who believed them to be hollow, and that the water merely acted as an envelope, is probably approaching the truth. M. Kaemtz, the celebrated German meteorologist, however, considers that they may be formed from a great quantity of minute drops of water mixed up together. De Saussure and others have recorded a similar opinion.

When fog becomes visible anywhere, it is, as we have before observed, because the air is completely saturated with moisture, which, on a sudden depression of the temperature, is condensed and precipitated. It is only on such occasions, therefore, and the air being in a quiescent state, that fog can exist. The deposition of moisture which we call dew is often formed under very different circumstances from those from which fog is produced. When the former is deposited, the warmth from the earth is prevented from escaping by some non-conductor of heat, as grass, etc., leaving the surface of the blades of grass much colder than the surrounding air, hence dew is formed. When fog occurs, the contrary is the case; for at these times water or moist earth being warmer than the air, the vapours that ascend become condensed in a similar manner to steam as it rises from boiling water, or to the breath which in frosty weather condenses as soon as it leaves the mouth. In autumn, this phenomenon of a fog being formed over marshy districts or above rivers is frequently observed at or before sunrise. This river fog can be seen hanging over the Thames for miles; and, when viewed from an elevated

position in the neighbourhood of Greenwich, it has a very peculiar appearance. On several occasions the writer has seen the Thames fog following the winding course of the river from the Pool, near the London Docks, past Deptford, Greenwich, Blackwall, to Woolwich, while at the same moment the air within a few feet of the banks of the river has been unusually clear, and the distant objects on the Highgate and Hampstead hills have been most distinctly visible.

The aspect of the most busy parts of London during a dense fog can scarcely be properly understood except from personal experience. Even on ordinary clear days the street traffic of our great thoroughfares requires skill and patience on the part of drivers of vehicles, particularly when any local obstruction or "block" takes place; but on foggy days, when objects are perhaps only visible at a distance of a few feet, and when these blocks are of very frequent occurrence, mutual forbearance of the highest kind must be the prevalent order of the day on all sides. During an evening fog, though the traffic is considerably diminished, yet there is still enough to require the greatest caution. It is at these times that we may occasionally meet the link-boy, torch in hand, ready to escort timid travellers across the street or even to their homes. Here we have indeed a *link* between modern times and the London of the last century, to which we are carried back in imagination, when the use of coal-gas as a street-illuminating agent was unknown, and when the only light found in the public thoroughfares of London consisted of a few lanterns placed here and there, and occasional glass oil-lamps. It was at this period that the coaches of the aristocracy rolled from the theatre and the ball escorted by their liveried torch-bearers, who, as soon as they had deposited the lords and ladies of the mansion, thrust their torches into those horn-like cavities which may still be seen in some of our oldest squares and streets at the West-end.

London fogs may be classed under three divisions: 1, Those which are produced solely by a sudden depression of the temperature, and which are noticed principally at or near sunrise; 2, Opaque yellow fogs, resulting from the condensed vapour mixed with smoke and other impurities contained in the atmosphere; 3, Intense gloom, accompanied only by a slight fog, caused chiefly by an accumulation of smoke in calm weather. This great gloom is often produced by a sudden shift in the wind. In this case, suppose the wind to change suddenly from west to east, the great body of the smoke will be brought back with an increased density; and as this repasses the City it is augmented by the clouds of smoke issuing from every house-top, and produces a great darkness, rendering temporary lights necessary. This gloom is not confined to the City, but at times is very great in the suburbs. The greatest example which we remember to have taken place in the south-eastern district occurred on the morning of Thursday, January 19, 1865. Between nine and eleven in the morning of that day the neighbourhood of Blackheath and Greenwich was completely enveloped in darkness, even in the most elevated places. The cause of this was entirely owing to the smoky atmosphere of London brought in that direction by a light north-west wind. This gloom was prevalent over a considerable portion of the South London suburbs, and even existed in the City itself, where it assumed more the appearance of a yellow fog.

In summer, or between May 1 and August 31, London is generally free from a foggy atmosphere. This arises from the great difference which exists during that time between the temperature of the air and that of the dew-

point, which is the degree of cold necessary to be produced before any precipitation of vapour in the atmosphere can take place. In the remaining portion of the year no month passes without some kind of fog of more or less density. To obtain some idea of their frequency, we have made an examination of the records of five years' meteorological observations made at Greenwich between the years 1858-1862, and have found that in the summer months no entry of a fog is made; but that between September and April that district of the metropolis has been visited by 44 dense fogs, and 140 light fogs, giving a yearly average of 9 dense, and 28 light fogs. But it must be understood that this meteorological phenomenon is not always general over the London district; for there may be fogs and mists of great density in the heart of the city, while the suburbs may be comparatively or wholly clear; or the contrary may be the case.

It is impossible to give the details of many of the dense fogs which have visited London; for the similarity of incidents which accompany all would be wearisome to the reader. We read of coachmen being unable to see the heads of their horses, which frequently are obliged to be led; of gas-lights and candles being lighted at mid-day in shops and offices, or even in private houses; and of the difficulty and danger of walking the streets at night, when even the splendidly illuminated West-end and City shops appear only as a few isolated, half-visible, ghostlike gas-lights. The recorded incidents of a few of the densest fogs may, however, be interesting.

The great and continuous frost of January 1814, during which the Thames was frozen over, was ushered in by a succession of dense fogs. Speaking of the morning mists at this time, which were produced solely by the excessively low night-temperature, Luke Howard has described the appearance of external objects in words which recall to our mind similar beautiful effects. On January 4 "the air was loaded with particles of freezing water. These attached themselves to all objects, crystallizing in the most regular and beautiful manner. A blade of grass was thus converted into a pretty thick *stalagmite*: some of the shrubs, covered with spreading tufts of crystals, looked as if they were in blossom; while others, more firmly incrustated, might have passed for gigantic specimens of white coral. The leaves of evergreens had a transparent varnish of ice, with an elegant white fringe. Lofty trees, viewed against the blue sky in the sunshine, appeared in striking magnificence: the whole face of nature, in short, was exquisitely dressed out in frost-work. When the sun, at length, broke through the fog, and loosened the rime, it fell unmelted, and lay in heaps under the trees." On the morning of Christmas Day, 1860, many of us may remember similar beautiful frozen rime exhibited on every tree and shrub in the immediate suburbs, which might be faithfully described by using Luke Howard's characteristic words just quoted. The night of Christmas Eve had been remarkably clear and cold, the lowest temperature at Greenwich being eight degrees of Fahrenheit. This intense frost, acting on the warmer air near the surface of the ground, produced at sunrise a very dense fog, the separate particles of which were rapidly deposited on the branches of every tree to a depth of an inch, or more in some places.

A fog of very extraordinary density visited London on Wednesday, November 12, 1828. It has been recorded in contemporary journals that the fog began to increase soon after noon, from which time till nearly two the effect was most distressing, causing the eyes to smart, and the throat to be so much affected as to produce a suffocating sensation. All the offices and principal shops were obliged to be lighted as at night. To see distinctly

beyond a few yards was impossible, causing an absolute state of darkness in all the narrow lanes and streets of the City. "In the great thoroughfares the hallooing of coachmen and drivers to avoid each other, seemingly issuing from the opaque mass in which they were enveloped, was calculated to awaken all the caution of riders, as well as of pedestrians who had to cross the streets."

A dense fog occurred on February 24, 1832, which lasted the whole day. What made it remarkable was that in the evening the West-end was partially illuminated in honour of the birthday of the late Queen Adelaide. Boys were noticed going about with torches exclaiming that they were looking for the illumination.

On Tuesday, November 2, 1847, the metropolis was visited with one of the most dense fogs that had occurred for several years. Towards noon the fog assumed a heavy and dense appearance, particularly in the City, rendering it impracticable to carry on business without the aid of lights. Before five o'clock the density had increased to such a degree as to render the traffic extremely dangerous not only to pedestrians, but to the multitude of vehicles of all descriptions that were going in every direction. Navigation on the river was entirely suspended. In the neighbourhood of the "Elephant and Castle," and other places where coaches and omnibuses are in the habit of stopping, men with links were stationed at short distances from each other. Several accidents, some of which were fatal, occurred.

On the evening of Saturday, January 21, 1865, the day to which allusion is made at the commencement of this article, the density of the fog was so extraordinary between six and nine that in the Strand, where there are so many magnificently-lighted windows, in addition to the ordinary street-lamps, one could scarcely see the ground on which he walked, or objects a few feet in advance. Where the shops were closed it was positively impossible to distinguish any object, however close, or to do more than just discern occasionally the street-lamps. The traffic became very dangerous at an early hour in the afternoon, while in the evening it was practically discontinued. Nearly all business on the river, or river-side, was suspended during the day, and the railway-trains were seriously impeded. This great fog was not confined to London, but extended over a considerable portion of the south-eastern district of England. The night preceding had been one of intense frost, the temperature of the air having been thirteen degrees below the freezing-point.

Incidents similar in character to the above have been recorded in various journals to have taken place during great fogs which visited London on December 31, 1817; January 16, 1826; December 14, 1829; November 22, 1853; February 4, 1855; and November 15, 1855. But it must not be supposed that the dense fogs which we have been describing are confined to the London district; for other large towns are similarly visited.

SIR ROWLAND HILL.

"OUR English Post-office," says Lord Macaulay, "is a splendid triumph of modern civilization." The eulogium of the historian is as fully deserved and as appropriate for its truthfulness as it is happily expressed. Let the reader but for a moment reflect on the enormous quantity of letters annually collected and distributed by the agency of this institution. Last year the number was 697,000,000! It enhances the wonder when one thinks of the small cost to the public, the amazing rapidity and the almost absolute security with which all this is effected. To Sir

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Rowland Hill

From photograph by Kilburn.]

Rowland Hill, unquestionably, beyond all other men, belongs the merit of adapting the Post-office to the requirements of the age, and of making it, what it emphatically is, a triumph of modern civilization. Compelled by advancing years and, we regret to add, by failing health, this eminent public servant and benefactor has lately resigned his appointment as Secretary to the Post-office, long to enjoy, we trust, in private life the repose (and the pension) which he has so well and so honourably earned.

Sir Rowland Hill was born at Kidderminster on the 3rd of December, 1795, and is the third son of the late Mr. Thomas Wright Hill, a native of that town. This gentleman subsequently settled at Hazelwood, near Birmingham, as head-master of a school, in the conduct of which he was assisted by his gifted sons, all of whom have since distinguished themselves in various spheres of activity and public usefulness. What is known as "the Hazelwood system" of education was originated by the Hills at their establishment. Still further improved, it is now carried out by Sir Rowland's brother, Mr. Arthur Hill, the conductor of Bruce Castle School at Tottenham.

The eldest of the family is Mr. Matthew Davenport Hill, the Recorder of Birmingham, whose enlightened and humane views on the treatment of criminals have commanded large acceptance, and been embodied in several salutary reforms. Another brother, Mr. Frederic Hill, late Inspector of Prisons, and the author of a valuable work on "Crime," is now Assistant-secretary to the Post-office.

As a child Rowland Hill showed an inventive genius and an aptitude for numbers; and when a young man he supported himself as a teacher of mathematics in his father's school and in families in the neighbourhood of Birmingham.

Labours of a more public and important character, however, devolved upon him in 1833, in connection with an association for founding the colony of South Australia. An Act of Parliament sanctioned the scheme in 1834, and a Royal Commission was appointed to carry it into execution, of which Mr. Hill became the secretary. The commissioners gave a ready testimony to his unwearied labours in their service, and to the "powers of organization" he showed in working out their plan of emigration. His activities, however, were not limited to his official duties: he took much interest in the proceedings of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and was the inventor of a new printing-machine to meet the great demand for the "Penny Magazine" issued by his friend Mr. Charles Knight.

The question of postal reform engaged Mr. Hill's attention in the year 1836. Reform in that department of the public service was on many accounts urgently required. The fact that the revenues of the Post-office, both net and gross, had remained stationary during the preceding twenty years, notwithstanding the vast extension of trade, and the increase of population, was evidence sufficient of serious defects in the existing system.

Postage was levied according to distance, and was so exorbitant in amount as practically to debar the great bulk of the community from making use of the Post-office. The rate varied, beyond the limits of the London district, from 4d. to 1s. 8d.; averaging 9d. for a single letter, which was taken to be a single sheet of paper not exceeding an ounce in weight. Any enclosure, however small, rendered a letter liable to double postage. Enclosures were detected by submitting letters to a strong light, thus incurring the risk of undue tampering with their contents, and at the cost of much of the official's time.

Franks were used by as many as could procure them

from members of Parliament, whose letters were exempt from postage; while, to a very large extent, business and other letters were conveyed in a clandestine manner through illegal channels. In some districts the evasion of postage was carried to so great an extent that five-sixths and elsewhere four-fifths of the letters were sent in violation of the law.

It is remarkable with what patience and equanimity the public endured this unsatisfactory state of things. For a number of years the late Mr. Wallace, member for Greenock, called the attention of the House of Commons to the defects of the postal system. Repeated motions were made by him for papers, returns, and accounts, which had the effect of somewhat arousing attention to the subject. The member for Greenock acted as the pioneer of the "Coming Man," and afterwards became his valuable coadjutor. All justice should be rendered to Mr. Wallace for his persevering efforts; but it was Rowland Hill who first really grappled with the difficulties of the Post-office question, and propounded a plan of reform as entirely original as it has proved triumphantly successful.

In conducting his investigations, his first course was to read very carefully all the reports on Post-office subjects; after which he entered into communication with Mr. Wallace, who kindly offered him assistance; he then applied to the Post-office for information, which was readily granted by Lord Lowther, the Postmaster-General. "These were the means," says Mr. Hill, in his evidence before the Select Committee on Postage, "I took to make myself acquainted with the subject."

The result of his investigations was embodied in a pamphlet entitled "Post-office Reform; its Importance and Practicability," which, early in 1837, was privately circulated among members of the Legislature and official men, and, two months later, in a second edition, given to the public. The main features of the reform scheme advocated by the pamphlet were as follows:—The abolition of the high rates levied on inland letters according to distance, and the establishment of an uniform rate of one penny per letter weighing not more than half-an-ounce; increased speed in the delivery of letters; more frequent opportunities of despatch, particularly in the metropolis; enlargement of the districts in which letters are brought to the houses; extension of postal facilities in rural districts; and simplification in the operations of the Post-office, with a view to economy in the management. The use of stamps, although not alluded to in the first or private edition of the pamphlet, formed part of the project in the second or public edition—having, meanwhile, been suggested to the author's mind by an idea thrown out by Mr. Charles Knight, of using stamped wrappers for newspapers. The chief characteristic of Mr. Hill's scheme, that which constituted at once its value and originality, was the uniform penny rate. Simple as it seems, it did not originate in a happy idea occurring casually to the projector's mind; it was the result of much investigation and laborious calculation. The author analyzed the expense of a letter to the Post-office, which he divided into three parts—that incurred by its receipt, transmission, and delivery. He showed that the expense of transmission was, on an average, not more than one-tenth of a penny. The transmission, in fact, as compared with the making up, opening, and delivery of the mails, caused but a small portion of the Post-office expenditure. Admitting as sound the principle of a charge according to distance, it being impossible to collect one-tenth or other small fraction of a penny, it followed that an uniform penny rate was a nearer approximation to justice than the postage levied

under the old system. Besides, there was the advantage in it of convenience; for the sake of which it was better to overlook any apparent anomaly, and to allow the more remote places to reap the benefit.

The penny postage, when first proposed, was generally regarded as visionary; but the more it was looked at the more its practicability became apparent. The mercantile classes, and indeed the great bulk of the intelligence of the community, were speedily won over to favour and support the scheme, while the popular imagination was excited and captivated by the vast boon it held out. Before Mr. Hill's pamphlet appeared but few complaints were made of the high rates of postage. In 1837 five petitions reached the House of Commons in favour of his plans. The number increased in 1838 to three hundred and twenty; and in the first half of 1839 to eight hundred and thirty; while, during the time of the greatest agitation, five thousand petitions were presented. The facts contained in the pamphlet could not be controverted. They were, besides, as clearly stated as the argument derived from them was cogent and the conclusion irresistible. Early in February 1838 Mr. Wallace moved in the House of Commons for a select committee to investigate and report on Mr. Hill's proposals. The motion failed, because resisted by the Government. A month or two later, however, the pressure had become so great that the Government yielded; and Mr. Baring, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, proposed a committee "to inquire into the present rates or modes of charging postage, with a view to such reduction thereof as may be made *without injury to the revenue*; and for this purpose to examine especially into the mode recommended by Mr. Rowland Hill." The committee sat sixty-three days, examined the principal officials of the Post-office and Stamp departments, as many as eighty-three independent witnesses, and also Mr. Hill himself, who, in his evidence, made good the conclusions to which he had come in his pamphlet. In their report the committee recommended the more frequent despatch and delivery of letters, and also pronounced in favour of a low uniform rate as just in itself, and, when combined with pre-payment and collection by stamp, as sure to be exceedingly convenient and highly satisfactory to the public. Notwithstanding the adverse evidence of officials, the committee virtually indorsed Mr. Hill's proposals; but, being by the terms of their appointment restricted to recommend only such plan as would not prove immediately injurious to the revenue, they suggested the adoption of an uniform *twopenny* rate.

Favoured by public opinion, and also so far stamped by the approval of a committee of the House of Commons, Mr. Hill's scheme was next submitted to Parliament, and in the session of 1839 it passed into law. The Lords of the Treasury having been by the Act empowered to carry the scheme into operation, a Treasury minute was issued on the 12th of November, reducing the postage on all inland letters to the uniform rate of fourpence. This was a preliminary step, to accustom the officials of the Post-office to the uniform rate and *charge by weight*—the two main points of the new system—before the great increase of letters should set in. On the 10th of January, 1840, the penny postage came into practical operation; and its author was established in an appointment connected with the Treasury for the express purpose of watching over and carrying his plans into effect. This was not the least arduous and trying part of his great undertaking; yet, as a reward for his previous exertions, he had the satisfaction of seeing his project placed on the statute book of the realm only two and a half years after it had been first

mooted, so rapidly had public opinion been enlisted in its favour and a powerful opposition overcome. Much of the opposition had been aroused by the sacrifice of revenue which the adoption of Mr. Hill's proposals necessarily involved. While he readily allowed that the pecuniary sacrifice would be considerable, he not less strongly affirmed that it would be only temporary—that the revenue would in time recover itself. It has in fact done so. The point reached by the gross revenue under the old system was passed in 1850-1, while the net revenue was more than reached in 1863; for, after deducting £500,000 for the packet service and all other expenses, a clear net increase appeared of £100,000. The question of revenue in respect of the Post-office is, however, after all a minor consideration; yet it could be shown that there has been no actual loss. From the stimulus given by cheap postage to trade, any deficiency which its adoption has caused in the general revenue of the country has been much more than made good by the increased productiveness of all the other sources of income. This argument was often used by Mr. Hill when his scheme encountered opposition on the ground of sacrifice of revenue. It has since become more and more evident that the Post-office ought not to exist for fiscal purposes; that it is in its nature an administrative institution, and designed to promote the commerce, the education, and the social well-being of the people.

Twenty-five years ago a Parliamentary committee on postal affairs, taking the broad view of the subject, thus reports:—"On the management of the Post-office and the regulation of the postage rates depends in a great measure the entire correspondence of the country, and in that correspondence is involved whatever affects interests or agitates mankind—private interests, public interests, family, kindred, friends, commercial interests, professional business, literature, science, art, law, politics, education, morals, religion."

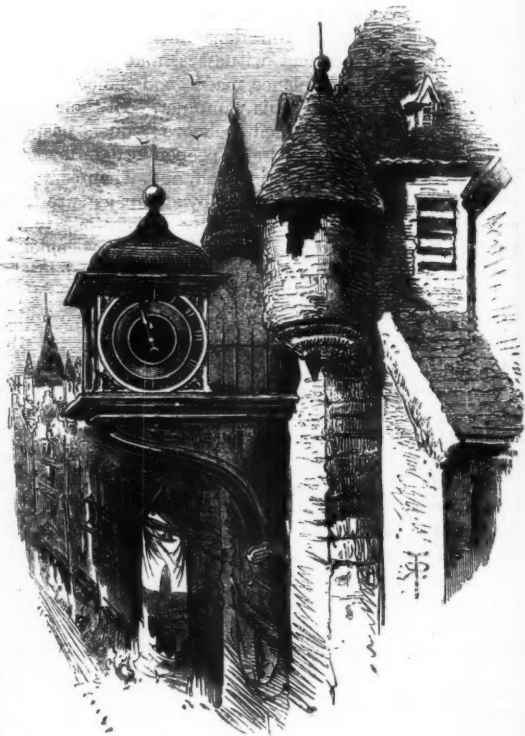
It is well known that Mr. Hill had to encounter much official opposition in working out his cheap postage system; besides, there existed a party in Parliament in no way favourable to the measure, and against whose votes it had become law. Some short time after the accession of the Conservative ministry of Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Hill was made to understand that his services were no longer needed; and, although he applied to be allowed to superintend the development of his plans without salary, the request was not granted. The work of Post-office reform, on which the penny system greatly depended for its complete success, was consequently arrested for four years, during which time its author acted as chairman of the London and Brighton Railway Company.

More just in their appreciation of Mr. Hill's merits and services, the public seized this opportunity to do honour to their benefactor. A subscription was opened, and at a banquet in London there was presented to him the magnificent sum of £13,360. In the address which accompanied the testimonial, Mr. Hill's measure of reform was pronounced one "which had opened the blessings of a free correspondence to the teacher of religion, the man of science and literature, the merchant and the trader, and the whole British nation—especially to the poorest and the most defenceless portions of it—a measure which is the greatest boon conferred in modern times on all the social interests of the civilized world." In his reply Mr. Hill gave full credit to those who had assisted him, especially to Messrs. Wallace and Warburton, members of the special committee of 1838, to Mr. Baring, late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to Lords Ashburton and Brougham.

When the Whigs were restored to power, in 1846, the ministry of Lord John Russell brought back the projector of the penny postage to his unfinished labours, by appointing him secretary to the Postmaster-General. Mr. Hill held this appointment until 1854; when, on the removal of Colonel Maberley to the Audit Office, he became secretary to the Post-office. In 1860 he received the honour of knighthood, being made a Knight Commander of the Bath. Since 1836, when he first turned his mind to the Post-office question, save during the four years of his proscription from office, Sir Rowland Hill has laboured assiduously to reform and improve the action of our great postal institution, and, as the results show, he has laboured with singular success. It is necessary specially to allude to the re-organization he effected in the Money-Order Office. It was lately stated in the House of Lords by a peer thoroughly conversant with the subject, that but for Sir Rowland Hill's reforms the business of that office would not have reached to one-sixteenth of its present proportions, and that it was doubtful whether it could have been carried on much longer. Sir Rowland so altered the system that, instead of eleven entries for every money order, the number was reduced to four or five; and with this simplicity there had been an absence of frauds formerly frequent on the part of postmasters. In 1847, before the reform, two hundred and twenty-six clerks were employed in the Money-Order Office, with much overtime, while in 1860 the number was only one hundred and twelve, with no extra work, and that notwithstanding a vast increase in the business of the office. The best test, however, of the success of the reforms is the pecuniary one. While, in 1847, the Money-Order Office showed a debtor balance of £10,000, and was thus conducted at a serious loss, it now yields a profit of about £30,000 a year. The establishment of the book-post is another of those valuable boons which our eminent official has conferred upon the country, and specially on literature. The division of the metropolis into postal districts was early proposed by him, but was not carried into effect until 1856. We cannot, however, from lack of space, more fully detail those postal reforms effected by Sir Rowland Hill during the time of his official connection with the Post-office. They are the developments of the system of a *low and uniform rate of postage*—the greatest reform of all—which he originated, and which, by dint of much labour and perseverance, he saw successfully carried into operation. He has placed his country under a weighty obligation, which we are glad to find has been acknowledged, not only by the rank of knighthood conferred, but by tributes not less honourable or less appreciative of the merits of a public servant. Birmingham, where Sir Rowland spent some of his earlier years, has voted a statue to him at the cost of £2000, to be placed in the new public hall. By a Treasury minute, dated 11th March, 1864, a pension three times the amount of the usual retiring allowance has been granted to him on account of his extraordinary services; and a message from the Crown proposing a grant of £20,000 has, with many graceful allusions to his merits, tact, judgment, and urbanity by distinguished members of both Houses, been cordially agreed to. It is also interesting to notice that at the late distribution of prizes awarded by the Society of Arts, the Albert Gold Medal was presented by the Prince of Wales, who presided, to Sir Rowland Hill, "for eminent services to all classes of the community in the creation of the penny postage system, and other postal reforms." It was the wish of Sir Rowland, on retiring from active duties in connection with the Post-office, to hold himself

in readiness for any public service that might be required of him; and we were glad to observe that Government has availed itself of his talents for organization and large experience as an official, by naming him one of the members of the Royal Commission on Railways, from whose labours we may expect many important reforms in the existing railway system of the country.

In the eloquent words of a recent writer in "The Edinburgh Review" we conclude our sketch of this distinguished man: "Under his influence the Post-office has ceased to be a mere fiscal instrument for privileged or high-priced communications; it has become a powerful and popular machine for uniting all sorts and conditions of men; it has rendered the intercourse of every member of this vast community, at whatever distance, almost as cheap, rapid, and easy as the act of speech; and it has converted the English ocean-post into the most efficient bond of union between the commercial interests of the globe. These are services which have never been surpassed in the magnitude of their results. They have been rendered by ingenuity and perseverance, sedulously directed to a single object. The means are simple, but the effects are worthy of the power of a magician. And, though men who have risked their lives on fields of battle, or borne the whole burden of public affairs, may have claims to more stately trophies and more lavish rewards, we know of no man who has conferred a greater amount of benefit upon his fellow-creatures than the unassuming author of 'Postage Reform.'"



THE CANONGATE OF EDINBURGH.

The abbey of Holyrood, the nucleus of the burgh of Canongate, was founded in 1128; and the buildings connected with it once covered a space of ground much

larger than that occupied by the palatial building well known by the title of Holyrood House to visitors and residents in the Scottish metropolis. Among the list of its abbots comparatively few illustrious names occur, though several of the earlier holders of the benefice made additions to the original fabric. Adam, abbot of Holyrood, swore fealty to Edward I of England in 1291, and was appointed one of the commissioners who were to examine the records of Scotland previous to their being conveyed to London. Crawford, abbot of Holyrood about the middle of the fifteenth century, obtained honourable distinction as a diplomatist. Under successive abbots, however, an ecclesiastical structure was at length completed, distinguished by noble proportions and general magnificence. It was built in the form of a cross, and consisted of a nave (that part which yet remains, though in a dilapidated condition), of a transept surmounted by a lofty tower, and of a choir, and was approached from the west by a portico of painted arches.

That part of the building which remains has a peculiarly ornate, semi-pointed Gothic arch, arch being repeated within arch far through the breadth of the massive wall. Above the doorway, and between the two elegantly-shaped windows surmounting it, there is a tablet, on which, illustrative of the mutations to which both ecclesiastical and civil fabrics have been exposed, the following inscription was engraved by the direction of Charles I:—

"HE SHALL BUILD A NEW HOUSE FOR MY NAME AND I WILL ESTABLISH THE THRONE OF HIS KINGDOM FOR EVER."

The eastern window of Holyrood Chapel is evidently of modern date. Beyond it, and further eastward, was anciently a wide space and lofty walls, traces of which have been found by more recent research. On several occasions the whole pile of buildings connected with the abbey church was partially destroyed. By appointment of Somerset, the protector, the monastery was suppressed, the lead stripped from the roof of the church, and the two bells removed. Many such ravages were subsequently repaired, and a portion of the building was fitted up as a place for Protestant worship, and appropriated to the use of the parishioners of Canon-gate.

The palace of Holyrood was the scene of various interviews between Mary Queen of Scots and Knox, the leader of the Scottish Reformers. In July 1568 the General Assembly of the Church deposed from the ministerial office Adam, titular bishop of Orkney, on account of his having therein celebrated the marriage between Queen Mary and Bothwell, which took place, after night-fall, in a room of Holyrood Palace, not now traceable from subsequent alterations, and at which only a few persons were present. We can also but refer to the events connected with the coronation of Charles I at Holyrood, in June 1633.

The restoration of the palace, which had been almost wholly destroyed by fire in 1659, only the south-western corner turret being of more ancient date, was executed according to the plans of Sir W. Bruce, the king's architect. During this reconstruction the private royal chapel was removed. This, doubtless, suggested to the sovereign's advisers the expediency of discharging the magistrates and parishioners of Canon-gate from further use of the building as their parish church.

James II, in 1687, directed that the abbey church should be fitted up as "our own Catholic chapel, and capable of the ceremonials and solemnities of the most ancient and most noble Order of the Thistle." This was

viewed with much dislike by the far larger proportion of the citizens of Edinburgh. When the Revolution took place, a body of the citizens broke into the abbey church and destroyed its ornamental fittings; some of the more unruly even proceeding so far as to tear off the coverings of the leaden coffins in the royal vault. For seventy years the church remained in the ruinous condition in which it had been left, when it was repaired at the expense of the exchequer, and new roofed; unfortunately, however, with heavy flagstones, under the ponderousness of which the walls gave way.

In 1745 Holyrood was visited by Prince Charles Edward, who made it his head-quarters while in Edinburgh; his insurgent followers being, for the most part, encamped on the south-east side of Arthur's Seat, on the ridge rising above the village of Wester Duddingston; few persons of consequence or respectability, however, proffering their services in the metropolis of Scotland to the "young chevalier."

Having given this succinct account of Holyrood Palace, we proceed to describe the adjacent, and for the most part highly ancient, quarter of the city of Edinburgh, with which it is connected. The progress of improvement has caused the disappearance of not a few relics of the past, though not a few still exist. Many of the more ancient buildings had inscriptions carved on them, which indicate the faith and piety of an older race. On one window the following is cut:—"I take the Lord Jesus as my only all-sufficient portion to content me." Another is found above the front of the entrance to one of the narrow alleys or closes leading off the main street. It is in Latin, and may be thus translated:—"Pity me, O Lord: from sin, blame, debt, and sudden death free me," 1618. A third inscription runs thus:—"To God alone be the glory and honour:" on the front of the house once tenanted by the Master of Oliphant, an adherent of Queen Mary.

New Street, a comparatively recent adjunct to Canon-gate, properly so called, affords a specimen of what was regarded as a fashionable modern street before the commencement of the new town of Edinburgh. Among its last-century occupants we find the names of Lord Kames, Lord Hailes, and other notable persons. Among the former occupants of St. John's Street, the widest and most modern thoroughfare in the district, begun in 1768, may be mentioned Lord Monboddo, at whose house Burns the poet was a frequent guest when in Edinburgh. At the head of the same street, in a house the access to which is by a turnpike stair, lived Mrs. Telfer, sister of Smollett the novelist. In the same street is Moray House, which has for a number of past years been occupied as a Normal School by the Free Church of Scotland; its once spacious and old-fashioned gardens being now partly built on by a church and schoolrooms, and partly occupied as a playground. The House itself appears to have been erected during the reign of James VI of Scotland, when the elegant style of building which was common in England during the reign of Elizabeth began to be copied in Scotland, of which there are also coeval specimens in Pinkie House and Seton Palace, both of them not many miles from Edinburgh. The interior of some of the rooms of the building now mentioned has been elaborately decorated. Here, in 1650, the son of the Marquis of Argyle was married to the daughter of the Earl of Moray during the pleasant month of May. The festivities lasted several days, and had not been drawn to a close when the Marquis of Montrose, after being defeated at Philiphaugh, was conducted through Edinburgh, the magistrates and a guard receiving him into custody at the Water Gate, whence, fastened to a

low cart, he was slowly drawn up the street. Between Montrose and the bridegroom's father hostilities had raged in the Western Highlands, and Montrose had ravaged Argyle's territory. Circumstances were now altered; and, an example of the heat which civil animosity has often engendered, as Montrose was conducted past Moray House, the wedding guests (amongst them Loudon the chancellor, Lord Warristoun, the Countess of Haddington, together with Argyle) stepped out on the balcony, as if rejoicing over a prostrate foe; three of the party being not long afterwards sentenced to perish by the hand of the executioner on the same spot, the grass-market, to which Montrose was being then conducted. When, four months after, Cromwell defeated the forces of Leslie in the battle of Dunbar and took possession of Edinburgh, the Protector took up his residence in Moray House, which was also the abode of Lord Chancellor Seafield at the time of the union between the two kingdoms. In Moray House, accordingly, many secret deliberations connected with the Union are believed to have been held, a summer-house near the foot of the gardens being said to be the place where the necessary signatures should have been affixed to the document. The mob, however, having become aware of the fact, gave such indication not merely of disapprobation but of meditated violence, that the parties concerned were obliged to leave in haste; while the Treaty is believed to have subsequently received the affixed signatures in a cellar of the High Street, long afterwards used as a coach-office, and exactly opposite to the site of the Iron Church.

Quensberry House, a very large erection, was built by the first Duke of Quensberry, who also built Drumlanrig Castle, Dumfriesshire, in which latter edifice, however, he only slept a single night. Charles, third duke, was born in this house, and made it a place of occasional residence when in Scotland. In 1801 the Earl of March, who had succeeded to the title, allowed the building to be stripped of its ornaments, which were sold to the Earl of Wemyss, with a view to the adornment of Gesford House. Government subsequently purchased Quensberry House at a very low price, with the view of using it as barracks. It is now, and has been for many years past, employed as a "House of Refuge for the Destitute Poor." On the north side of the Canongate, and opposite the entrance to St. John Street, is a lofty tenement bearing the name of Jack's Land. Here was the town residence of Susannah, Countess of Eglington; the other inhabitants of the flats having also been persons of distinction. To this then "genteel" residence David Hume the historian removed his "goods and chattels" in 1753, changing his residence from Riddels' Land, Lawnmarket; and in this house a portion of the "History of England" was written. To the rear of the house just mentioned stood, even in the remembrance of a few of the later survivors of the last generation, a dilapidated fragment of the mansion once occupied by Dalziel of Binns, commander of the forces in Scotland during the reign of Charles II, a relentless enemy and persecutor of the Covenanters, respecting whom Captain Crichton, a fellow-soldier, said that, on the accession of James II, "death intervened," rescuing him from the difficulties he was likely to be under between the notions which he had of duty to his prince on the one side, and true zeal for his religion on the other. With this fierce chief loyalty is known to have been a leading principle, whether the demands proceeding from the "fountain of honour" were in themselves right or wrong. Dalziel's loyalty was shown likewise in a lesser yet peculiar way—no razor being allowed to

traverse his chin after the beheading of Charles I. His beard was allowed to grow undisturbed, though its length had become such as to gather a crowd whenever he was seen in the street.

The pile of building called Shoemaker's Land is also worthy of remark. The front entrance is embellished by a tablet, enriched by angels' heads, with an ornamental border enclosing the arms of the craft, and the date 1677. An open book is inscribed with the first verse of the one hundred and twenty-third psalm, in metre. A tenement westward of this, and probably successor to another of still older date, bears the same insignia, and the inscription, "*Blessed is he that wisely doth the poor man's case consider.*" The hall of this corporation stood on the west side of Little Sack's Close, was adorned by insignia of the craft, and furnished with massive oaken tables and chairs to accommodate the brethren at their various meetings. There was also a carved oak chair or throne, surmounted by a crown, with the date 1682, used for the inauguration of King Crispin, on occasion of the annual ceremony of 26th October, when the mimic sovereign went out in procession with a numerous body of attendants, "princes, premier, champion in armour, and courtiers of various degrees," mounted on horseback, doubtless on staid quadrupeds, whose sober facings were suited to the unwonted posture of the riders.

Panmure House—its grounds now occupied as a laundry—was formerly the town residence of the Earls of Panmure, and was, at a later period, the residence of Dr. Adam Smith, the well-known author of the "Wealth of Nations." Whiteford House, for many years, and up to 1823, the residence of Lord Bannatyne, a judge of the Court of Session, stands on the site of the ancient residence of the Earls of Wintoun, owners of the stately house of Seatoun, which, with its noble chapel, in East Lothian, still exists in a ruined condition. George, fifth earl, was attainted on account of his share in the rebellion of 1715, and the building was consequently allowed to fall into decay; but the ruins, as marked in an old map of Edinburgh, appear to have covered a considerable space of ground. This, "my Lord Seatoun's house in the Canongate," was the residence appointed for the French ambassador during his stay in 1582, and appears to have been a richly decorated and somewhat gloomy building, described by Sir Walter Scott in "The Abbot."

A little below Morry House, and on the same side of the street, stands—little altered externally by the hand of time—an ancient and picturesque specimen of the older class of residences, at one time the habitation of the first Marquis of Huntley. In 1639 a scene of great rejoicing took place here, on occasion of the marriage of a daughter of the house to Lord Drummond, afterwards third Earl of Perth. When Maitland's "History" was written, this house was occupied by a Dowager Duchess of Gordon—the proper ducal residence being situated upon the ridge leading up to Edinburgh Castle. The house was built in 1570. The front is adorned by fine sculptured tablets, the westmost having a device emblematic of the resurrection, several stalks of wheat growing out of bones, with the motto, "*Spes altera vite*," "*There is hope of another life.*"

Proceeding from the foot of Canongate towards Abbey Hill, at the north-east corner of the grounds recently added to the enclosure around Holyrood House, a small and curious building, evidently of great antiquity, is discernible—probably one of the lodges of the ancient palace, and popularly known by the name of Queen Mary's Bath. A fine spring of water is known to exist

beneath the earthen floor. On the pulling down, a good many years since, of part of the adjoining tenement by a former owner, a turret staircase, communicating with the roof of the lesser building, being pulled down, and a portion of the wood-work being removed, a richly inlaid dagger, much corroded by rust, was found in the sacking of the roof, and was conjectured, with some plausibility, to have been one of the weapons hastily thrown aside by the murderers of Rizzio, who are known to have retreated after the murder by this part of the royal gardens.

A. R. B.

We are indebted for the foregoing brief notes to the Rev. Andrew R. Bonar, senior minister of the Canongate parish. The Canongate Kirk is not an attractive structure: the only picturesque object in view is the projecting clock, which our artist has sketched. In the kirk-yard is the tomb of Professor Dugald Stewart, and monuments of other Edinburgh notables. Beside the kirk is the borough court-room, and the gaol, bearing the arms of the Canongate, with the oddly-placed motto, *Sic itur ad astra*. Of the ancient house of John Knox, one of the most interesting monuments of the Canongate, an account has been given in a previous Number, and more fully in "The Sunday at Home," No. 449, with illustrations.

Mr. Bonar's predecessor in the Canongate Kirk was a man of singular character, of whom many traditional stories are told, two of which are preserved in Dean Ramsay's "Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character."—"Dr. Gilchrist received an intimation from one of his hearers, who had been very irregular in his attendance, that he had taken seats in an Episcopal chapel. * One day soon after he met his former parishioner, who told him candidly that he had changed his religion. 'Indeed,' said the Doctor, quietly: 'how's that? I ne'er heard that ye had ony.' It was this same Dr. Gilchrist who gave the well-known quiet but forcible rebuke to a young minister whom he considered rather conceited and fond of putting forward his own doings, and who was to officiate in the Doctor's church. He explained to him the mode in which he usually conducted the service, and stated that he always used the Lord's prayer before the sermon. The young minister asked if he 'might not introduce any other short prayer.' 'Ou ay,' was the Doctor's quiet reply, 'gif ye can gie us onything better.'"

An earlier minister of the Canongate was the Rev. Alexander Stewart (of Moulin). Simeon, of Cambridge, and other good men of all Christian denominations, preached occasionally in the Canongate Kirk in Stewart's time.

THE ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH.

WHEN recently we gave some account of the past history of submarine telegraph cables (No. 715), the "Great Eastern" was about starting on the enterprise which has since resulted in another failure. Our readers will have shared in the anxious suspense which followed her protracted absence, and in the general disappointment which attended her return. Let us yet hope that the experience acquired may be made available to overcome future difficulties, and that the Atlantic telegraph will soon be usefully at work, uniting the old world and the new in closer bonds of mutual good-will. For the completion of our record, we take from Mr. Russell's graphic diary the account of the actual breaking of the cable, on Wednesday, the 2nd of August, which he

has justly called "a sad and memorable day." There had been a strong gale the night before, but the ship scarcely felt it, and went on paying out cable, without let or hindrance, at a high rate of speed—seven knots an hour:—

"About day-break the wind suddenly shifted to N.N.W. and fell to a light breeze, and at four a.m. the course was altered to N.W. by W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W., the sea falling. Morning broke beautifully, and the cable ran out easily, at the rate of seven miles an hour. At 5.35 a.m., ship's time, the paddles were reversed by order from the electrician's room. In fact, at eight a.m., Greenwich time, or a minute after, while the electricians were passing the first of the half-hourly series of currents to the shore, the galvanometer detected a flaw of electricity which indicated a serious fault. The tests gave no result as to locality, for the fault was very varying; but it was generally believed to be not far from the stern of the ship. While Mr. Cyrus Field was on watch in the tank, a little before the time of the accident, a grating noise was audible as the cable flew over the coil. One of the experienced hands immediately said, 'There is a piece of wire,' and called to the look-out man above to pass the information aft; but no notice appears to have been taken for some time of the circumstance. After the ship had been stopped, and the remainder of the flake in which the fault was supposed to have occurred had been paid out, a piece of wire was seen projecting out of the cable in the fluke, and, on one of the men taking it in his fingers and trying to bend it down, the wire broke short off. It was nearly three inches long, and evidently of hard, ill-tempered metal, which had flown out through the strands of the cable in the tank. The fault in the cable which had gone overboard might obviously have been caused by such a piece of wire, and there could be no doubt that the wire of the outer covering of the cable was capable of inflicting injury on the gutta-percha it was intended to protect. The discovery was in some measure a relief to men's minds, because it showed that one certainly, and the second possibly, of the previous faults might have been the results of similar accident. It was remarked, however, that this fault occurred on the same watch as all the previous misfortunes had occurred.

"As the fault was too serious to be overlooked, and as there was a difficulty in detecting its situation, preparations were made to get the picking-up apparatus ready. Previous to doing so, two cuts were made in the cable; the first near the old splice, between the main and the fore tank (cable all right); the second cut three miles inboard, which showed the fault to be in that portion of the cable which was overboard. The wire rope and the chain were now secured to the cable forward, which showed a maximum strain of 23½ cwt.; and at 9.55, Greenwich time, the cable was severed and went over the stern, 1186 miles having been paid out when the end splashed into the water. With less difficulty than usual—in fact, with comparative facility—the cable was hauled in over the bows at 10.8 a.m., Greenwich time. The strain in it, according to the dynamometer, was from 50 cwt. to 55 cwt., though the latter figures represented the maximum only reached on one occasion. We were nearly in 2000 fathoms of water; but it was considered a favourable circumstance that we had not got a few miles farther, as we should have then been in the very deepest part of the Atlantic plateau. As far as could be ascertained, the ship was now over a gentle elevation, on the top of which there was only 1950 fathoms of water. The picking-up was,

as usual, exceedingly tedious, and one hour and forty-six minutes elapsed before one mile was got on board; then one of the engines' eccentric gear got out of order, so that a man had to stand by with a handspike, aided by a wedge of wood and an elastic band, to aid the wretched engine. Next, the supply of steam failed, and when the steam was got up it was found that there was not water enough in the boilers; and so the picking-up ceased altogether for some time, during which the ship forged ahead and chafed against the cable.

"Let the reader turn his face towards a window, and imagine that he is standing on the bows of the 'Great Eastern,' and then, of course, on his right will be the starboard, on his left the port side of the ship. In front, fixed in the bows, is a large V-wheel, as it is technically termed, with a smaller wheel of the same kind on the same axis at each side, on which the cable is drawn as it is pulled up from the sea by the picking-up apparatus, and thence is wound under the dynamometer and drum-wheels till it has passed the breaks and is coiled down aft in safety. There are at the bows of the 'Great Eastern' two large hawse-pipes, the iron rims of which project nearly a foot beyond the line of the stem. After two miles of cable had been picked up, the 'Great Eastern' was forced to forego the use of her engines because the steam failed, while her vast broadside was exposed to the wind, which was drifting her to the larboard or left-hand side, till by degrees an oblique strain was brought to bear on the cable, which came up from the sea to the bows on the right side. Against one of the hawse-pipes the cable now caught on the left-hand side, while the ship kept moving to the left, and thus chafed and strained the cable greatly against the bow; for now it was held by this projection, and did not drag from the V-wheel. The 'Great Eastern' could not go astern lest the cable should be snapped, and without motion some way there is no power of steerage. At this critical moment, too, the wind shifted, so as to render it more difficult to keep the head of the ship up to the cable. As the cable then chafed so much that in two places damage was done to it, a shackle chain and a wire rope belonging to one of the buoys were passed down the bow over the cable and secured in a bight below the hawse-pipes. These were hauled so as to bring the cable, which had been caught on the left-hand side by the hawse-pipes, round to the right-hand side of the bow, the ship still drifting to the left; while the cable, now drawn directly up from the sea to the V-wheel, was straining obliquely from the right with the shackle and rope attached to it. It was necessary to do this instead of veering away, as we were near the end of the cut of cable.

"The cable and the wire rope together were now coming in over the bows in the groove in the larger wheel, the cable being wound upon a drum behind by the machinery, which was once more in motion, and the wire rope being taken in round the capstan. But the rope and cable, as I have tried to explain, were not coming up in a right line, but were being hauled in, with a great strain on them, at an angle from the right-hand side, so that they did not work directly in the V in the wheel. Still, up they came. The strain was shown on the dynamometer to be very high, but not near breaking-point. At last, up came the cable and wire rope shackling together on the V-wheel in the bow. They were wound round on it, slowly, and were passing over the wheel together, the first damaged part being inboard, when a jar was given to the dynamometer, which flew up from 60 cwt.—the highest point marked—with a sudden jerk, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. In fact, the chain shackle

and wire rope clambered, as it were, up out of the groove on the right-hand side of the V of the wheel, got on the top of the rim of the V-wheel, and rushed down with a crash on the smaller wheel, giving, no doubt, a severe shock to the cable to which it was attached. The machinery was still in motion, the cable and the rope travelled aft together, one towards the capstan, the other towards the drum, when, just as the cable reached the dynamometer, it parted, thirty feet from the bow, and with one bound leaped, as it were, into the sea."

"It is not possible," Mr. Russell goes on to say, "for any words to portray the dismay with which the sight was witnessed and the news heard." After brief consideration, it was determined to get out the grapnels, and search for the cable at the bottom of the Atlantic. Twice it was recovered and hooked, and raised a considerable way towards the surface, but proved too heavy for the strength of the lifting apparatus. The "Great Eastern" remained near the spot eight or nine days, and then, leaving two buoys to mark the position of the cable, turned her head back towards Europe. Mr. Russell thus describes the final attempt on the evening of Friday, August 11th:—

"A line consisting of 1600 fathoms of wire rope, 220 fathoms of hemp rope, and 510 fathoms of Manilla was prepared, and carefully examined, of which 1760 fathoms were pronounced good, the rest being rather suspicious. The grapnel soon touched the bottom. For some time the ship drifted onwards, but at 3.50 p.m., ship's time, the strain on the rope rose to 60 cwt. as it came in over the bows, easily, by the new capstan improvements. The ship's head varied from W.N.W. to W. by S., and as the rope came in the screw was set gently to work at times to keep it to the wind, which had increased somewhat, accompanied by showers of rain. The dynamometer index rose higher and higher, till it reached 80 cwt., and once, as a shackle came through the machinery, flew up to 106 cwt. It was a certainty that the Atlantic cable had been caught for the third time, and was fast held in the grapnel coming up from its oozy bed. Is there need to say that the alternations of hope and fear which agitated all on board reached their climax? There was an intensity of quiet excitement among us, such as men feel when they await some supreme decree. Some remained below, others refused to go forward, where the least jar of the machinery put their hearts in their mouths; others walked in the saloon or upon the after-deck abstractedly. . . . At 9.40 p.m., Greenwich time, just as 765 fathoms had been got in, a shackle on the hemp hawser passed through the machinery, and in a moment afterwards the rope parted near the capstan, and flew over the bow with a whistling sound like the rush of a round shot. In all the crowd of labourers not one was touched, because the men held on to their stoppers, and kept the end straight. But there lay the cable beneath us, once more buried under coils of rope and wire, to which had just been added 1750 fathoms more. Orders were then given to get up steam, and all haste was made to return from the disastrous spot, which will bear no monument of such solicitous energy, such noble toils, such ill-requited labours. The buoys which mark the place where so much went down will soon be waifs and strays in the strong seas of autumn, and nothing will be left of the expedition but entries in logbooks, 'lat. 51 24, long. 38 59, end of cable N. 50 W. $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles,' and such memories as strengthen those who have witnessed brave fights with adverse fortune and are encouraged to persevere in the sure conviction that the good work will be accomplished in the end."